

RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN IRAN

for Turkey. In the 1920's the association published an orientalist magazine, *Novy Vostok* ("New East"), with M. Pavlovich (Weltmann) as editor-in-chief. Branches of the association were established in Tashkent, Baku, Tiflis, Irkutsk, and also abroad, Teheran being the first foreign seat. In many cases the same men had to act both as scholars and as officials of the Soviet government. Tardov, for example, on whose initiative the Teheran branch was created, was appointed Consul General at Isfahan. Raskolnikov skillfully combined the functions of a scholar, a military and naval commander, and a diplomat, acting in the latter capacity as Soviet Minister to Afghanistan. Lavrov and Astakhov were also employed in the Soviet foreign and secret service.¹²

With regard to the concrete execution of revolutionary propaganda, a body of prime importance was, of course, the Third International. Apart from its executive functions the Comintern was also a center of theoretical debates. As such it was a policy-making organ second only to the Soviet government. Its theses and resolutions were fundamental in guiding all those who had to perform various revolutionary assignments in the Middle East.

The Comintern's Second Congress in 1920 devoted considerable time to the formulation of oriental policies. It made an important contribution to Marxist theory by confirming the doctrine that a backward country might skip the capitalist phase. During this session the decision to call the Congress of Eastern Peoples to Baku was reached. Theses adopted at the Second Congress, together with the subsequent Baku resolutions, gave basic guidance to oriental Communists for the next eight years.

As time went on, however, these theses were gradually supplemented by various new directives. In the later twenties a need was felt to review, perhaps to revise and to codify, all these principles.

Several reasons justified their reconsideration. First of all, the Soviet regime had passed through a period of ferment between 1924 and 1927, that is, between Lenin's death and the emergence of Stalin as the undisputed ruler of Russia. Behind the brutal contest for power was an ideological struggle between Trotsky's "Permanent revolution" and Stalin's "Socialism in one country." Stalin and his close

12 Agabekov, *op. tit.*